

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

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TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, ETRD, MU

SUBJECT: 1976 MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM

REF: SAN JOSE 5406 (1975)

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO COSTA RICA'S MEAT EXPORT PROBLEM AND ITS HIGH LEVEL APPEALS FOR AN EXPANSION OF THOSE EXPORTS TO THE U.S. IN 1976. DIFFICULTIES IN CHANGING THE RELATIVE ALLOCATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM, AND THE REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE PROGRAM COULD FAIL IF WE ATTEMPTED TO DO SO, HAVE LED US TO SEEK OTHER POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM. WE HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE EC COMMISSION THAT CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO

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ACCOMMODATE COSTA RICA AND WE BELIEVE COULD LEAD TO

SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN TOTAL COSTA RICAN MEAT EXPORTS.

2. YOU ARE THEREFORE REQUESTED URGENTLY TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO THE GOCR AT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL:

A. THE UNITED STATES IS SYMPATHETIC TO COSTA RICA'S NEEDS AND TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MEAT EXPORTS TO COSTA RICAN DEVELOPMENT.

B. THE UNITED STATES MIGHT FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCLUDE AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS IF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WERE GIVEN TO ANY ONE COUNTRY REPRESENTING A DEVIATION FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE HISTORIC PERFORMANCE STANDARD USED TO CALCULATE 1975 ALLOCATIONS. ONCE SUCH A SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FACTOR WERE USED, OTHER COUNTRIES COULD MAKE SIMILAR APPEALS AND THE PROGRAM MIGHT BECOME NON-NEGOTIABLE.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM WITHIN THE QUANTITATIVE LIMITS DECREED BY THE PRESIDENT AVOIDS IMPOSITION OF MANDATORY QUOTAS THAT WOULD BE AT A LEVEL 100 MILLION POUNDS BELOW THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT LEVEL. UNDER THE MANDATORY QUOTA PROGRAM THERE WOULD BE NO REALLOCATION OF SHORTFALLS RESULTING IN A FURTHER REDUCTION OF ACTUAL IMPORTS. THUS ALL EXPORTERS TO THE U.S. WOULD BE DAMAGED BY FAILURE OF THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM.

D. THE UNITED STATES HAS USED ITS GOOD OFFICES (IN CONFIDENCE) IN ARRANGING WITH THE EC COMMISSION FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTANTIAL COSTA RICAN BEEF EXPORTS TO THE EC. THE COMMISSION HAS ASSURED US THAT IT HAS OBTAINED COMMITMENTS FROM TWO EUROPEAN IMPORTERS, ONE FRENCH (ACRONYM SOCOPA) AND ONE GERMAN, THAT THEY WILL CONTACT COSTA RICAN EXPORTERS REGARDING PURCHASES OF COSTA RICA MEAT FOR IMPORT INTO THE EC. SUCCESSFUL OPENING OF THE EC MARKET TO COSTA RICAN MEAT COULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS IN THE LONG RUN AS WELL AS FOR 1976. IT COULD ADD VALUABLE DIVERSIFICATION TO COSTA RICA'S EXPORT MARKETS, THEREBY HELPING TO INCREASE EXPORT STABILITY.

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3. YOU MAY ALSO WISH TO POINT OUT TO GOCR THAT MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT SIGNIFICANT WORLDWIDE DEMANDS TO DEVELOP IN 1977 AS US AND EUROPE ENTER DOWNTURN IN THEIR CATTLE PRODUCTION CYCLES.

4. YOU SHOULD ASK THAT THE GOCR INFORM US OF CONTACTS WITH THE EUROPEAN IMPORTERS AND ARRANGEMENTS THAT MAY BE CONCLUDED.

5. RE QUESTION RAISED REFTTEL, PROPOSED COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS
HAVE BEEN HELD UP PENDING OUTCOME OF DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED
ABOVE AS WELL AS RESOLUTION OF OTHER OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS
AND REQUESTS. KISSINGER

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